



Casa Cuna Progresso gets a makeover for the Golden Jubilee Anniversary

The staff of the Casa Cuna care facility looked quite spiffy, as did the newly refurbished center during an informal gathering to celebrate the actual fiftieth anniversary of its founding on April 4, 1957.

On Wednesday evening, the staff members were wearing shirts with the new Casa Cuna logo for designed by the newest member of their staff, Annuska Henriquez, as they welcomed various individuals that have supported the center over the years.

A grand open house celebration is planned for the entire community on Saturday, June 23, with a fund raising fair, an annual event at the center. By that time it is expected for all the repair and painting work to be completed, so that Casa Cuna can present its face to visitors.

Wednesday's gathering was to celebrate the actual anniversary of the center and to thank those responsible for the completion of the renovation project.

Casa Cuna Progresso is a live-in care facility for children ages infant to seven years that have been removed from troubled homes by the social services. They are cared for and administered to by the loving staff of Casa Cuna that has specialized training in assisting these children to achieving normalcy.

The Director of Casa Cuna, Charisse Hoen-Daly welcomed many of the supporters of the center over the years with a special poem to honor them all, but she had a particular thank-you for Hotelier Ike Cohen and his Foundation, which has been a staunch support of their work throughout the years. Additionally receiving mention for their substantial support of the refurbishment project taking place over the last four years were the Aruba Way Foundation, CEDE Aruba, Samenwerkende Fondsen, mariniers Kazerne, Bright Bakery, The Healthy Living Club, KPMG, Rica Foods, Meta Corporation, and the Kiwanis Palm Beach and Rotary Clubs. These organizations contributed not only to the renovations, but also a badly needed new bus, another anniversary gift to the center.

Attending the event and receiving particular honor was Diet Booi, the former Director of CEDE Aruba, which provides substantial funds for its operation. She and others who have contributed to the continued success of the center were awarded long stem roses by the children that live there at present. Applauding her along with the rest of the gathering was the President of the Parliament, Mervyn Wyatt-Ras, who revealed that she had worked at the center for twelve years.

Ms. Hoen-Daly also outlined the center will continue its renewal project over the next four years with the furnishing and supplies for the children, and educational programs to assist both the parents and children of troubled homes.

Annuska Henriquez was also honored for her design of the new logo, which was chosen from the fifteen submitted. Various aspects of the design have significance, as it symbolized the security and comfort that Casa Cuna offers, and the gold of the design to celebrate its fifty years of service to the community. The evening included the presentation of three commemorative stamps by the Aruba Post Office to mark the occasion.

The Director also offered a collective thanks to the many "silent donors" amongst the general public, the various service organization and businesses of the island, the banks and the media for their support in making the Golden Jubilee Anniversary such a special occasion.

The Philatelic Department of the Postkantoor issues a commemorative stamp to honor Casa Cuna Progreso

During an informal party to celebrate the golden jubilee anniversary of the Casa Cuna center children, Jennifer Kock of the Philatelic branch of the Post Office presented to the public three new stamps that are part of a special issue to commemorate the occasion.

The three stamps, issued in the amounts of 50 cents, 1.25 Aruban Florins, and 1.50 florins, beautifully recount a bit of the history and purpose of Casa Cuna Progreso in the creativity of noted artist Eefje van de Straten.

The first stamp celebrates the founding of Casa Cuna, with its purpose to attend to the physical and emotional care of children from troubled homes ranging from infancy to seven years. The original home was founded at the Parkietenbos on April 4, 1957, then moved to Pos Chikito in 1960 with the assistance of the Lago Refinery. They donated two barracks and the furniture. At this time the Aruban government also committed to supporting the salaries of the staff. The charitable assistance of Aruban commerce, service organizations and individuals support the center's continued operation. The first stamp honors Luciana Maria Koolman, better known as "Sister Luisa" who worked at Casa Cuna for more than twenty years as a mother for "her children."

The second stamp depicts the helping and supportive hands of the center and the children that they care for, from the youngest to the oldest. The children are brought to Casa Cuna upon the request of the Department of Social Affairs, and/or the Guardianship Board. The caregivers of Casa Cuna become a substitute family for these children.

The final stamp is imprinted with an illustration of the existing center, the home of Casa Cuna since the early seventies, built with the assistance of the Development Fund of The Netherlands. This center has been in use since 1976.

During the presentation, artist Eefje v/d Straten was honored with a long-stemmed rose present by the children of Casa Cuna, as was Diet Booi, the former Director of CEDE Aruba, the social organization responsible for a great deal of the center's funding. Diet was also presented with a personal rendering of the second stamp for all her efforts over the years to see that Casa Cuna Progreso remained a vital and viable service to the Aruban Community.

These first issues can be purchased at any of the four post office outlets. The main post office is in Oranjestad, across from the San Francisco Church, and additional locations are San Nicolas, Santa Cruz and in the Royal Plaza Mall across from the harbor in Oranjestad. For additional information contact philatelic@postaruba.com.